

**Shortage of Cheap Hotels for
Middle Class Domestic**

5299. SHRI L. RAMANA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is shortage of hotels for the middle-class domestic tourists in the country;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) if not, the locations of these hotels for middle-class tourists and their minimum and maximum charges?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SHRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There is shortage of hotels for the middle class domestic tourists at some of the selected tourist centres in the country. This is primarily due to the non-availability of land at reasonable cost.

- (c) Does not arise.

Poor Safety Records of IA

5300. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether in view of poor safety records of Indian Airlines, the Ministry of Finance has in 1994-95 advised the IA to initiate steps in consultation with General Insurance Corporation to reduce hazards, achieve better results from the view point of accidents and improve safety to win the confidence of the insurers;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the insurance paid by IA increased from \$ 3.8 million in 1989-90 to \$ 43.5 million in 1994-95 and whether it was attributable to high frequency of accidents; and
- (c) if so, what concrete steps have since been taken to improve the safety records of IA and what improvements have since been made therein so far?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) The insurance premium of Indian Airlines in respect of Hull, Spares and Liability for the year 1994-95 increased to US \$ 42.5 million, which was mainly due to the high claim ratio of Indian Airlines and hardening of the insurance market.
- (c) The maintenance and operations of the aircraft in Indian Airlines is done strictly in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the manufacturers of the aircraft and approved by the Director General of Civil Aviation. As a result of the steps taken by Indian Airlines, its safety record has considerably improved. Consequently, the rate of insurance premium in respect of Indian Airlines aircraft has substantially reduced from US \$ 42.5 million in the year 1994-95 to US \$ 25.6 million in 1996-97.

[Translation]

Allotment of STD/PCO Booths

5301. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH:

SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government allots STD/PCO booths on the priority basis to the blind and handicapped persons;
- (b) if so, the number of STD/PCO booths allotted to such people in Uttar Pradesh during each of the last three years;
- (c) the number of blind and handicapped persons enlisted in the waiting list for STD/PCO booths as on 31st December, 1996; and
- (d) the time by which they are likely to be allotted STD/PCO booths?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, preference in allotment is given to blind and handicapped persons by the STD PCO allotment committee while allotting the available number of STD/PCO lines.

(b) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

[English]

**Electrification of Mughalsarai-Patna-Howrah
Rail Section**

5302. SHRI CHITRASEN SINKU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Mughalsarai-Patna-Howrah railway line have not been electrified as yet, resulting in the late running of Rajdhani Express and other superfast trains on this route and the passengers have to face a great inconvenience due to it;
- (b) if so, whether there is any concrete proposal for the electrification of this rail route;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the time by which the above rail route is likely to be electrified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Electrification work on Mughalsarai-Patna-Sitarampur section has been taken up and section Sitarampur to Howrah is already electrified. However, passenger trains including Rajdhani and Superfast trains are running satisfactorily on diesel traction.

(b) to (d) The section from Sitarampur to Jasidih has been energised. The entire Sitarampur-Patna-Mughalsarai section is targetted for completion by December 1999.